

CULTURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY – LANDSCAPES * OLMSTED PROJECT COVER SHEET

Please submit completed form to: Architectural Survey Coordinator
State Historic Preservation Office, Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development
450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 5, Hartford, CT 06103

I D E N T I F I C A T I O N	PROPERTY NAME (Current/Historic)		
	Memorial Park / Williams Memorial Park / Second Church Burying Ground, Hempstead Park		
	COUNTY	TOWN/CITY	VILLAGE
	New London	New London	
	JOB NUMBER		
	Primary: 01001 Related Job Numbers:		
	Landscape Type		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park, Parkway, Recreation Area. Scenic Reservation <input type="checkbox"/> City/Regional Plan, Improvement Project <input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision, Suburban Community <input type="checkbox"/> College/School Campus <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds of Residential Institution <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds of Public Building <input type="checkbox"/> Private Estate / Homestead <input type="checkbox"/> Cemetery / Burial Lot / Memorial / Monument <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds of Commercial / Industrial Building <input type="checkbox"/> Country Club / Resort, Hotel, Club <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds of Church <input type="checkbox"/> Arboretum, Garden <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibition, Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Miscellaneous		
	DATE OF ORIGINAL PROJECT: 1884-1885		
	SUBSEQUENT PROJECTS:		

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DESIGNER(S) (primary)

- Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.
- John Charles Olmsted
- Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.
- Other firm member(s):
- Other notes: Proposed plans not implemented

Other Designers (prior to or following Olmsted project):

Repositories consulted with source materials

- Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, Olmsted Archives (online albums)
- Library of Congress
- Olmsted Online (OlmstedOnline.com)
- National Archives and Record Administration
- Connecticut State Library
- Hartford History Center
- Other: The Olmsted Legacy Trail (<https://www.olmstedlegacytrail.com/>)

Observations regarding features characteristic of Olmsted firm design

Williams Memorial Park was first established as the Second Burial Ground. Local resident Charles Augustus Williams hoped to promote development of the surrounding neighborhood by reducing the stigma associated with the site's use as a burial ground, and the presence of a nearby stone quarry, by establishing a park on the site to offer amenities similar to those found at Williams Park nearby. To address the design of such a park space, Williams, in his capacity as mayor of New London, sought the help of Frederick Law Olmsted in 1884. Initially, he requested Olmsted's consultation in the matter of relocating the burials, adding a library to the property, and establishing a public park. Not all stakeholders in the city were in favor of the idea, particularly the siting of a library on the parcel that might block views toward the city center and Long Island Sound. Olmsted also questioned how difficult it would be to develop the site given the presence of ledge stone and rock outcroppings. Nonetheless, Olmsted prepared drawings for the park property, with concepts for siting the library high on the site with a commanding view to the city center. Olmsted included serpentine walking paths connecting the library with Hempstead and Broad Streets as well as Cottage Street. Grading plans indicated proposals for significant excavation of the existing knolls and depressions to accentuate the grade change and emphasize the upper lawn and terrace area. Stairs are shown providing access across the grade

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changes, with low plants and vines covering the slopes. Olmsted also indicated a location for a cemetery and memorial space intended to accept interments of individuals already at rest on the site, hoping to avoid relocating the graves to another site. The alcove for the burial ground was composed of stone quarried on the site used to construct walls, niches, and monuments used to enclose the space from view by the neighbors and create a solemn, private gathering area for remembrance and reflection.

In 1885, Olmsted appears to have received a cool reception from Williams and the Parks Commission related to his designs, and likely did not continue with the commission after this. The city appears to have moved the graves to Cedar Grove Cemetery, later planting trees and making other improvements based on their own design ideas. It is possible that the granite curbing, and the stone piers and walls along Hempstead Street are the result of Olmsted's design suggestions related to reusing quarry materials. The library was never built within the park, but located further down the hill on Huntington Street, where it still stands today. In the 1890s, a Civil War monument honoring the 21st Regiment Connecticut Volunteers, a decorated Civil War unit of men from eastern Connecticut, was erected within the park.

Although Olmsted may have proposed design features for the park, it was not developed based on his work and thus should not be listed as a job completed by the firm.

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I D E N T I F I C A T I O N	PROPERTY NAME (Current/Historic) Memorial Park / Williams Memorial Park / Second Church Burying Ground, Hempstead Park (Job #01001)													
	COUNTY New London	TOWN/CITY New London	VILLAGE											
	STREET AND NUMBER (and/or location) Broad Street and Hempstead Street													
	OWNER(S) <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUNICIPAL <input type="checkbox"/> STATE <input type="checkbox"/> FEDERAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRIBAL <input type="checkbox"/> EASEMENT City of New London													
	LAT/LONG COORDINATES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Center Point <input type="checkbox"/> Polygon 41.35656, -72.10151													
	PARCEL INFORMATION Acres: 3.5 PID(s): MBLU(s): F11-173-3, F11-173-2													
	USE (Present) Public park		(Historic) Public park; burial ground											
	SURVEY TYPE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reconnaissance-Level <input type="checkbox"/> Intensive-Level													
	D E S C R I P T I O N	LANDSCAPE TYPE (Check all that apply) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Designed <input type="checkbox"/> Vernacular <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural/Ethnographic <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Linear <input type="checkbox"/> System/Multi-Site <input type="checkbox"/> Residential <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Institutional <input type="checkbox"/> Maritime <input type="checkbox"/> Green <input type="checkbox"/> Park- Active Recreation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park-Passive Recreation or Commemorative <input type="checkbox"/> Other – specify:												
		DATE OR PERIOD (Include source of date) 1884-1885												
DESIGNERS (Entities that created, designed, constructed, or shaped the landscape) Reportedly designed by the Olmsted firm, but the proposals for the park provided by Olmsted were not implemented.														
DESIGN SCOPE (For designed landscapes, explain what work was commissioned.) Sketch design of entrances, paths, and the siting of a library, along with an alcove for relocated graves and commemoration														
LOCATION OF DRAWINGS/IMAGES/SOURCE MATERIAL Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site; Library of Congress														
VISUAL ASSESSMENT SUMMARY (Check boxes for the qualities that are key features of this landscape. If attaching descriptive narrative, consider these categories.) <table border="0"> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Layout & Spatial Relationships</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Water Features</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Circulation</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drainage</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Topography</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Buildings/Structures/Objects</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plantings/Vegetation</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Recreational Space</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Views & Vistas</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other:</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Boundaries</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Design Style: Picturesque</td> </tr> </table>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Layout & Spatial Relationships	<input type="checkbox"/> Water Features	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Circulation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drainage	<input type="checkbox"/> Topography	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Buildings/Structures/Objects	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plantings/Vegetation	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreational Space	<input type="checkbox"/> Views & Vistas	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Boundaries	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Design Style: Picturesque
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<input type="checkbox"/> Boundaries	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Design Style: Picturesque													

DESCRIPTION (Visual Assessment Summary)

Layout & Spatial Relationships: Open green space public park located at the corner of Broad and Hempstead Streets near downtown New London in an area that includes residential blocks and institutional properties and is located near commercial corridors. The park is sited on a sloping hillside and is edged to the south by an apartment complex. The park features a grove of mature shade trees, another of evergreens, a rock outcropping, stone piers marking entry through a low stone wall along Hempstead Street, and a granite Civil War monument. During the summer, temporary sculptures and signs are often erected on the open lawn facing Broad Street. Winding walks connect entrances along Broad and Hempstead Streets. An identity sign is at the corner of the two city streets.

Circulation: The city streets of Broad and Hempstead edge the park to the northwest and northeast. Concrete sidewalks edge both streets. Internal circulation is composed of a winding walk system that connects entrances along each city street, with a spur that continues past an apartment building to the southwest corner of the park. The walk is primarily concrete, although a section near Broad Street is paved with asphalt. A walk leads to the apartment building along the eastern edge of the park.

Topography: The park terrain slopes from west to east.

Plantings/Vegetation: Large street trees are present along Broad Street at the northern end of the park and along Hempstead Street. Large shade trees are also present over much of the park, which is otherwise primarily maintained in turf. Species include sycamore, scarlet oak, southern red oak, ginkgo, honey locust, and blood maple. Ornamental trees include dogwoods and Japanese maple. Ornamental shrubs are located near the corner of Broad and Hempstead Streets including abelia, viburnum, and spirea. There are also groves of evergreen and needled deciduous trees between the main walk and the apartment building that include spruce and bald cypress.

Drainage: A concrete swale edges the concrete walk as it extends east through the park. The swale ends at a pair of metal grates and drop inlets.

Buildings/Structures/Objects: There are no buildings present. Structures include the stone wall that edges the park along Hempstead Street, with the entry into the park marked by stone piers, and the lower stone wall or curbing that edges the park along Broad Street.

Small-scale features include a Civil War monument honoring the 21st Regimental Connecticut Volunteers that is in the form of a granite obelisk in the northern corner of the park. Nearby are an interpretive sign, a park identity sign, and a historic district sign. East of the Hempstead Street entrance along the walk are a bench and a library book sharing box. A trash receptacle and overhead light is along the walk.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Williams Memorial Park is a public open space located along one of the main thoroughfares in New London—Broad Street. Another park, Williams Park, established during the nineteenth century is located several blocks away. The 4-acre park property once served as a cemetery known as the Second Burial Ground, named to distinguish it from the Ye Antientist Burial Ground located nearby along Hempstead Street, which is original to the city and among the oldest in New England. The Second Burial Ground was established by the city during the late eighteenth century after Ye Adventist began to run out of burial space.

Land surrounding the burial ground first began to be developed during the 1830s as well-to-do merchants and real estate speculators built homes and sold lots. One of those acquiring lots nearby was Thomas W. Williams, a partner in a whaling firm, in 1845. Williams established a stone quarrying operation near the park along Cottage Street that supplied material used to build important city buildings, including Second Congregational Church in 1870-1872.

CONTINUATION SHEET Williams Memorial Park (#01001) / Broad and Hempstead Streets, New London

Thomas's son, Charles Augustus Williams, hoped to promote further development of the neighborhood by reducing the stigma associated with the site's use as a burial ground and stone quarry and establish a park that might offer amenities similar to those found at Williams Park nearby, such as a fountain, bandstand, benches, and fencing. To address the design of such a park space, Williams, in his capacity as mayor of New London, sought the help of Frederick Law Olmsted in 1884. Initially, he requested Olmsted's consultation in the matter of relocating the burials, adding a library to the property, and establishing a public park. Not all stakeholders in the city were in favor of the idea, particularly the siting of a library on the parcel that might block views toward the city center and Long Island Sound. Olmsted also questioned how difficult it would be to develop the site given the presence of ledge stone and rock outcroppings.

Nonetheless, Olmsted prepared drawings for the park property, with concepts for siting the library high on the site with a commanding view to the city center. Olmsted included serpentine walking paths connecting the library with Hempstead and Broad Streets as well as Cottage Street. Grading plans indicated proposals for significant excavation of the existing knolls and depressions to accentuate the grade change and emphasize the upper lawn and terrace area. Stairs are shown providing access across the grade changes, with low plants and vines covering the slopes. Olmsted also indicated a location for a cemetery and memorial space intended to accept interments of individuals already at rest on the site, hoping to avoid relocating the graves to another site. The alcove for the burial ground was composed of stone quarried on the site used to construct walls, niches, and monuments used to enclose the space from view by the neighbors and create a solemn, private gathering area for remembrance and reflection.

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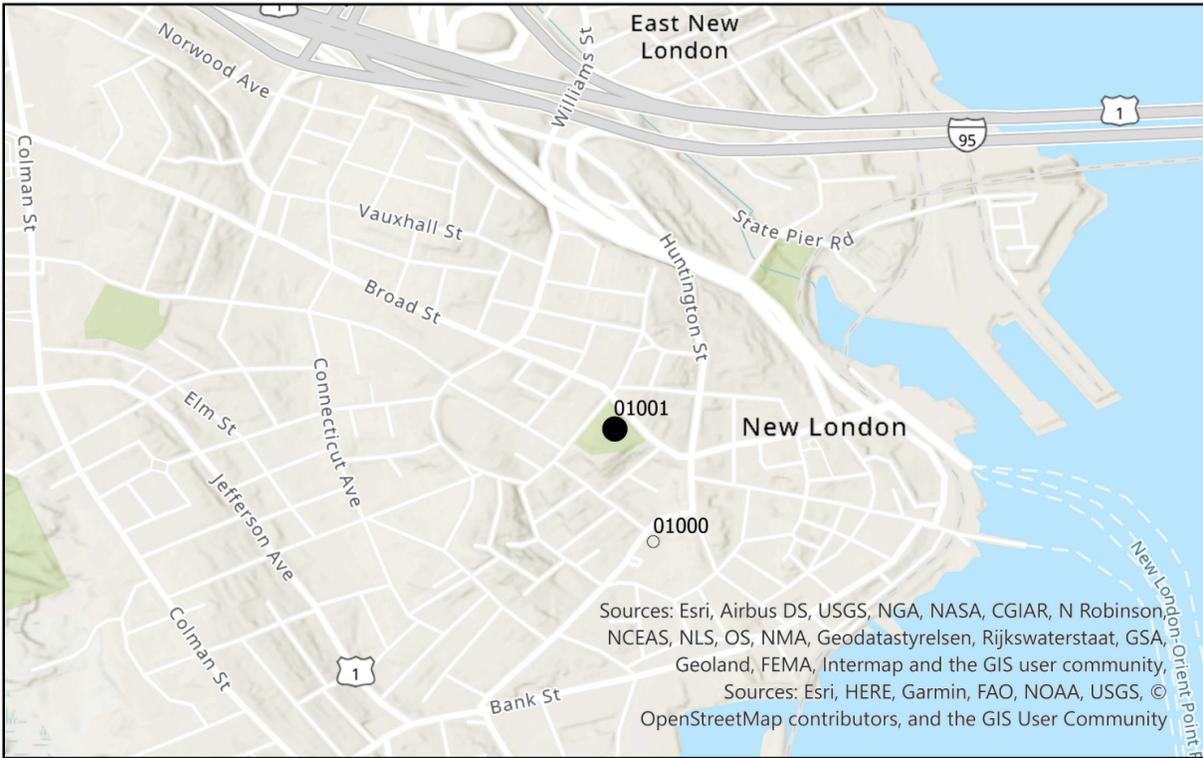
REFERENCES

Connecticut Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects. "Williams Memorial Park, New London, CT," *The Olmsted Legacy Trail*. Available at <https://www.olmstedlegacytrail.com/williams-memorial-park>. Accessed December 15, 2021.

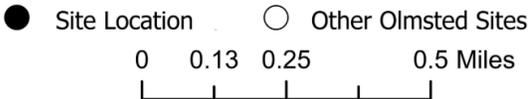
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CONTINUATION SHEET Williams Memorial Park (#01001) / Broad and Hempstead Streets, New London

GRAPHICS



JOB: 01001 LOCATION: New London

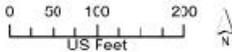


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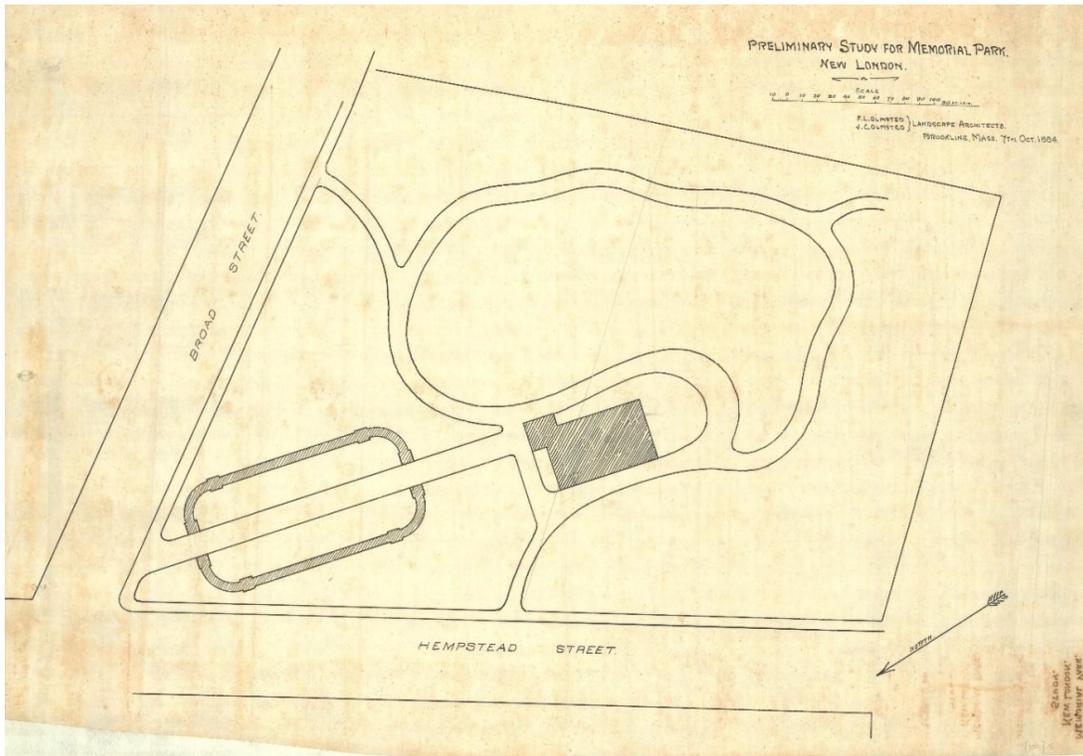
CONTINUATION SHEET Williams Memorial Park (#01001) / Broad and Hempstead Streets, New London



JOB: 01001 LOCATION: New Loncon PROJECT: Williams Memorial Park



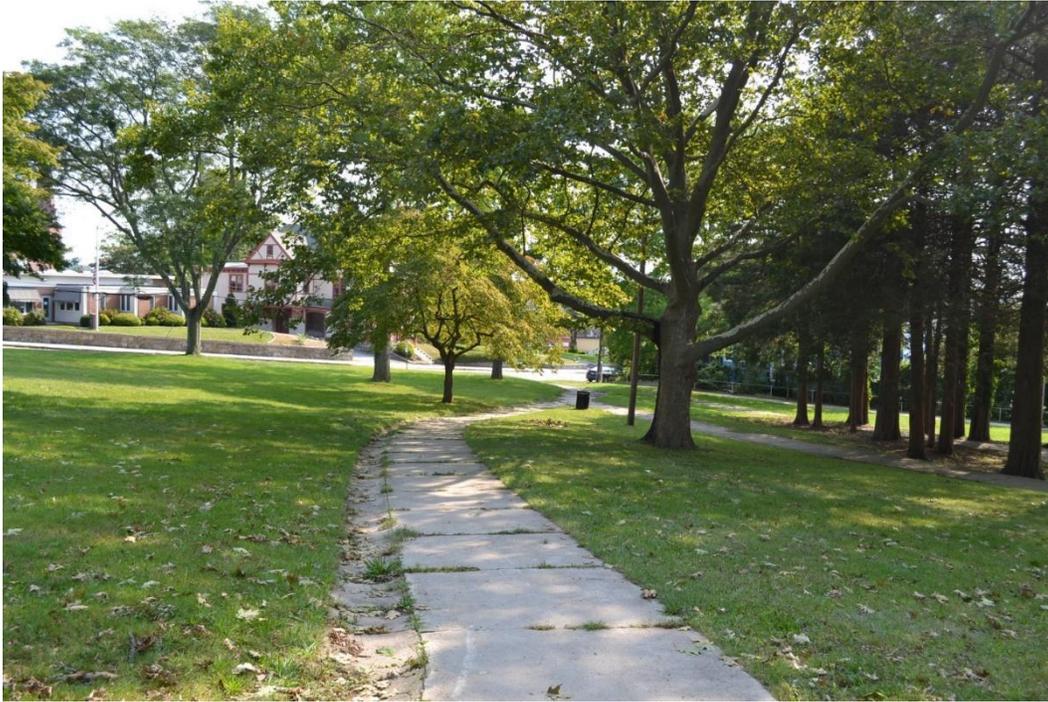
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Preliminary Study for Memorial Park, 1884, F.L. Olmsted and J.C. Olmsted Landscape Architects. (Source: courtesy Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site)



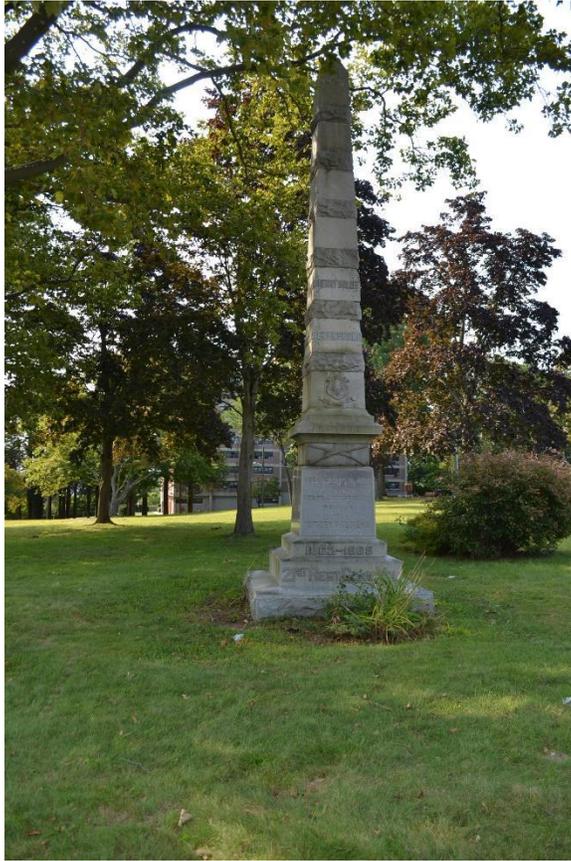
View southeast of one of the entrances into the park marked by stone piers. (All photographs taken by the authors in 2021 unless otherwise noted)



View southeast along the walk that crosses Williams Memorial Park between Broad and Hempstead Streets.



View west along walks leading west from Broad Street, one to the adjacent apartment complex.



View southeast of the Civil War memorial within the park near the intersection of Broad and Hempstead Streets.